

**Testimony before the Appropriations Committee  
February 14, 2017**

**Department of Rehabilitation Services budget cuts and changes**

**Governor's H.B. 7027 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE  
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS  
THEREFORE**

Good afternoon Senators Osten and Formica, Representative Walker and members of the Appropriations Committee.

My name is Elliott Calderon and I am a registered voter in Bridgeport.

*I am here to testify in regards to the proposed budget for the States Independent Living Centers specifically the ILC in Stratford, CT - Access Independence.*

*I am deeply troubled regarding the possibility of the removal of monies designated to the ILCs. For the past 5 years I've served on the Access Independence Board of Directors. I've seen the impact that the agency and its programs have on the disabled community.*

*Currently the organization employs individuals with disabilities or those with relatives that are disabled. Removing state funds for the agency would result in layoffs first at the Agency Level. The agency provides consumers the opportunities to live independently. They connect them to housing, work readiness training programs, transportation and other essential services.*

*I am a proud resident of CT. My roots are here in CT. I went to local schools/programs, graduated from the University of Bridgeport. I also am a tax payer. I work for a tech firm in Trumbull. I serve in the City of Bridgeport's Commission for People with Disabilities.*

***I forgot to mention, I am in a wheelchair.***

*Imagine if I didn't have the services/programs that serviced people with disabilities?*

Thank you for this opportunity to speak and share my (lived) experience with you about what this would mean to me/my loved one/people I care about!